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THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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ENG

Failed promises of the richest countries to support the right to development

The richest countries of the world promised to help developing countries halve poverty, reduce child mortality by two thirds and ensure every child gets free and good quality primary education by 2015. There remains a huge gap between promises and action. The Society for Threatened Peoples is concerned that the richest countries in the world may once again fail the poor and break past promises to fight poverty. The lack of development has been causing numerous ethnic and religious conflicts in 2001. Without serious action, future prospects for conflict prevention are bleak. Although G8 governments have committed themselves to ensuring the achievement of the international development goals for 2015, current trends indicate failure.

Rich and poor country governments at numerous international meetings have promised to tackle the debt crisis, to improve the living conditions of the poorest and to protect the planet from climate change, deforestation and species extinction. Long-term extinction trends in plants and animals have been unaffected by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Several dozen indigenous peoples have disappeared since the Earth Summit due to a lack of programmes to preserve biological diversity and to support sustainable development. Hundreds of indigenous peoples have been suffering from the destruction of rainforests and mangrove areas. The global rate of tropical forest destruction remains at the level it was in the early 1990s – 1 % per year. That means 10 % of the world's rainforest will be destroyed in a decade. There is an urgent need for funding of programmes on sustainable development in order to ensure the survival of hundreds of indigenous peoples and to protect biodiversity.

There have been many promises of the rich world to tackle these crises. But promises have not been matched with resources. Aid levels have declined to their lowest levels, at $ 53bn, and are still declining. Between 1999 and 2000, G7 aid fell by almost 5 %. However, while the target level for aid has been agreed at 0,7 % of the economic wealth of a country (GNP), G7 countries only allocate an average 0,19 %,. In the meantime non – G7 donor countries give 0,46 %. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, provide an equivalent of four fiths of total aid delivered by the USA, yet have the combined population of one Federal State in the USA. Sweden provides more aid than Canada. The Netherlands are delivering twice as much as Italy. The Society for Threatened Peoples is ashamed about the appaling gap between the promises of the richest countries and the resources given to poorer countries. According to UN estimates, an additional $ 100bn could be provided to developing countries, if the richest countries actually would meet their 0,7 % commitment.

The Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the UN Commission on Human Rights to urge the richest countries to keep their promises and to provide 0,7 % of their economic wealth to poorer countries in order to ensure sustainable development and to prevent ethnic, religious and social conflicts. Failed promises of the richest countries to support the right to development and to prevent ethnic, religious and social conflicts.